

# Answers to Frequently Asked Questions

Texas • Natural • Resource • Conservation • Commission

## FY 97 Fees For Wastewater Permits Clean Rivers Program (Regional Water Quality Assessment Program)

### What Is This Fee?

Senate Bill 818, which went into effect in June 1991, requires a comprehensive water quality assessment (evaluation) in each river basin in Texas. In most cases, the assessment is done by a river authority, or another designated local government, in cooperation with the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission (TNRCC).

Senate Bill 818 requires the TNRCC to recover the reasonable costs of the assessment program from wastewater permit holders and water right holders. TNRCC rules (30 Texas Administrative Code [TAC], Sections 320.21-.22) have established the fee calculation method described below.

### Why Am I Billed Twice for My Discharge Permit?

The Water Quality Assessment and the Waste Treatment Programs are separate functions with separate billings. In each case, the fee is based on authorization limits in your wastewater permit, but the rates and methods of calculation are different.

### How Are the Fees Calculated, and When Are the Bills Sent?

The bills are sent in September each year. The fee calculation method is as follows:

- The fee is based on the permitted flow limits and traditional pollutant limits without regard to the actual amount or quality of the discharge for the permitted facility. Fees are calculated from the permit limits in effect September 1, 1996.
- The daily average flow limit in the permit is used as the flow amount. When the permit does not specify a daily average flow limit, the charge is based on 50 percent of the daily maximum flow limit. The fee per facility is the sum of the following:

<b>Contaminated flow</b> \$375 per MGD
<b>Uncontaminated flow</b> \$1.75 per MGD
<b>Traditional pollutants</b> \$3 per pound of daily authorization

For permits that authorize a discharge, the fee will not be less than \$300 nor more than \$40,000. For no-discharge permits, the fee is \$200. For inactive permits, the fee is \$150.

### What Do Those Terms Mean?

The following definitions will help you understand the fee calculation method:

- **Uncontaminated flow:** Noncontact cooling water or mixed flows that contain at least 90 percent noncontact cooling water and not more than 1 MGD of process wastewater.
- **Contaminated flow:** Sanitary sewer wastewater, process wastewater, or mixed wastewater containing more than 10 percent process wastewater.
- **Traditional pollutants:** Oxygen demand (BOD/COD/TOC), total suspended solids (TSS), or ammonia.
- **No-discharge permit:** One that does not authorize a discharge, whether or not effluent parameters are specified.

### What Does the "FY" Mean?

The "FY" represents the fiscal year of the TNRCC; FY 97 is the time period from September 1, 1996, through August 31, 1997. The fee assessment and payment correspond to that time period. Your current bill may include fees for years before FY 97 if there is any reason that those fees were due and have not yet been paid.

## **What If the Fees Shown on the Bill Are Not Correct?**

Any request for recalculation of fees must be submitted in writing, and the amount not in question must be paid by the due date. Please refer to the back of the bill for additional information. If you have questions about the bill, you may call the Financial Administration Section at:

For owner names:     A-K: (512) 239-0356  
                              L-Z: (512) 239-0354.

For answers to questions about the water quality assessment program under Senate Bill 818, you may call the Water Planning and Assessment Section at (512) 239-4416.

## **If My Permit Has Expired, Do I Still Owe the Fee?**

If your permit expired before September 1, 1996, you do not owe the fee. Return your bill with a letter stating the expiration date.

## **Where Is the Wastewater Treatment Facility, and How Do I Get a Copy of My Permit?**

The authorized location of the wastewater treatment facility is described on the first page of your permit. The description of permit limits usually begins on the second page. To obtain a copy of your permit, contact TNRCC Record Services at (512) 239-2920. There is a small fee for copying.

## **How Much Time Do I Have to Pay the Fee?**

This fee is due 30 days after the invoice date shown on the statement.

## **Are There Any Late Charges or Penalties for Late Payment of This Fee?**

Yes. There are interest and penalties for late payment of this fee. See the back of the invoice for details.

## **If I Am Not Able to Pay the Fee by the Due Date, Will My Permit Be Cancelled or Other Action Taken?**

When a wastewater permit comes up for renewal, it will be delayed until your delinquent fees are paid. However, permit renewal will not be delayed if a request for recalculation of the fee was properly submitted but has not yet been processed by our staff.

## **Why Must I Return the Coupon with My Payment?**

The payment coupon (the top portion of your bill) contains an optical character reader (OCR) line. When we receive your payment, a computer reads your account number from that OCR line. Without the original coupon, we must send your payment to another location for manual processing. That slows our processing

of your payment and raises the possibility that your payment may not be credited to the correct account. The delay in processing could cause you to incur late charges.

## **I Have More than One Account; May I Send One Check for the Total Amount?**

You may send all your payments in one envelope, but please enclose a separate check for each coupon. If the number of checks does not equal the number of coupons, we will have to process your payment manually, and your accounts may not be credited correctly or in time to avoid late charges.

## **Where Do I Send My Payment?**

You should return your payment and the payment coupon to the mailing address shown on the back of the coupon. Use the envelope provided for your convenience.

## **If I Have a Wastewater Permit and a Water Use Permit, Will I Be Billed for Both? When are Bills Sent for Water Rights?**

When a single entity owns both a municipal or industrial water right and a wastewater permit for the same facility, no municipal or industrial water right fee is assessed for that facility under this program. The fee for the wastewater permit is assessed, and is billed separately. Other water rights, except those for irrigation, will be billed each year soon after the wastewater billing.

## **Where Can I Get Information about These Fee Regulations?**

For fee rules (30 TAC, Sections 321.21-.22), contact the Publications Section at (512) 239-0028. If you have personal computer and a modem, you can access the TNRCC Online Bulletin Board System (BBS) at (512) 239-0700 for information about the TNRCC, including its rules. TNRCC Online supports up to 14,400-baud modems and follows the most common communication settings: NO parity, 8 databits, 1 stopbit, FULL duplex (N,8,1,F). Also, the current fee rules for this program were published in the April 26, 1994, Texas Register (19 TexReg 3171).



## **TEXAS NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

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